

Office of the
State Department
of Education

**Public
School Information**

**2014
Legislative
Report**

IDAHO CORE STANDARDS

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Idaho Core Standards

The Idaho Core Standards have raised expectations and fueled aspirations for all Idaho students. At the same time, they represent an enormous, system-wide challenge for the entire K-16 public education system in the State of Idaho. The Idaho State Department of Education and State Board of Education recognize this. With the support of the Idaho Legislature and Governor Otter, we have worked with local school districts since 2011 to implement the Idaho Core Standards and make this implementation successful in Idaho public schools.

Idaho Core Standards and the ongoing support from the Idaho Legislature represents a significant step in supporting students, teachers, parents and all educators as we begin to create problem solvers, critical thinkers, creators and innovators, while moving away from the lower-level memorization and repetition of multiple-choice testing. It is clear that, just as President Kennedy challenged America to win the space race by declaring that “we choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things not because they are easy but because they are hard,” we as a state find ourselves at an educational Sputnik moment: 47% of Idaho students attending some form of postsecondary education, all having received a high school diploma, require remedial coursework. Nationally, only 49% of employers say recent graduates are adequately prepared for the workplace. It is difficult for Idahoans and Americans to play our traditional role as leaders and innovators when we are slipping behind. As Kennedy said, this country was “not built by those who waited and rested and wished to look behind.” We must do more to prepare students for success after they leave high school, whether they choose career or post-secondary education. No priority could be greater than this.

The Idaho State Department of Education has approached implementation on several levels as this report will document, with a primary focus on reaching teachers and principals with sustained, coherent, effective and ongoing professional development. This report will document strategic partners providing professional development statewide, regional structures created to provide localized support, higher education partnerships, and communication efforts and publications for diverse stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

In 2009, Idaho embarked on a process to raise academic standards in the core subject areas of mathematics and English language arts. For many years in Idaho, we have faced a challenge. While Idaho students perform well academically in grades K-12, too many students graduate from high school unprepared for the rigors of postsecondary education or the workforce. In fact, while about 90% of Idaho students graduate from high school, only 47% choose to go on to some form of postsecondary education. Of those who choose to go on, nearly half need remediation once they get there for things they should have learned while in high school. Other states face the same challenge.

Knowing this, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna and Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter decided to work together with other states to solve address this challenge by raising academic standards. Through a voluntary, state-led effort, known as the Common Core State Standards Initiative, states took the lead in 2009 to develop new academic standards in mathematics and English language arts that are higher, more in depth, and comparable with any other country in the world. States worked together in 2009 and 2010 to develop these standards. The final standards were published in 2010. Idaho teachers, colleges and universities and the business community reviewed the standards in the summer of 2010 and recommended the State Board of Education adopt these new, higher academic standards. The Idaho State Department of Education held more than 20 public meetings across the state to gather public input. The

State Board of Education voted to adopt the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts as Idaho's Core Standards in November 2010. The House and Senate Education Committees of the Idaho Legislature finalized the adoption in January 2011.

After these votes, the Idaho State Department of Education set forth a five-year timeline for Idaho schools and districts to transition to these higher academic standards:

- 2011-2012: Idaho schools and districts would prepare for the new standards
- 2012-2013: Idaho schools and districts would prepare for the new standards
- Spring 2013: Idaho pilots the new assessment aligned to higher standards in 120 schools
- 2013-2014: Idaho schools and districts teach to the higher standards for the first time
- Spring 2014: Idaho field tests the new assessment aligned to higher standards with all schools
- 2014-2015: Idaho will measure students against the higher academic standards for the first time.

During the 2013 Legislative Session, the Legislature recognized professional development funding should not be one-time in nature, but ongoing to assist teachers throughout their career. This year, the Legislature focused this funding on the implementation of the Idaho Core Standards. Specifically, the Legislature appropriated \$3.755 million to *"be used for professional development, training and assistance that promotes the implementation of Idaho core mathematical and English language arts standards including, but not limited to, the alignment of curriculum and instruction to such standards."* The following report outlines the Idaho State Department of Education's use of the funding to assist local school districts in the implementation of Idaho Core Standards.

THE BUDGET

The \$3.755 million that the Legislature appropriated for the Idaho State Department of Education to use in assisting local school districts with the implementation of the Idaho Core Standards is one piece of nearly \$22 million local schools and districts have had access to this fiscal year for professional development. Here is a breakdown of all the funding related to Idaho Core Standards:

- Idaho Core Standards Professional Development Funding: \$3.755 million in new funding was appropriated in the FY2014 Public Schools Budget for the Idaho State Department of Education to deliver professional development to schools and districts. The state is organizing focus groups with teachers and school administrators to ensure this funding is spent in a meaningful and effective way. *Total: \$3.755 million*
- Excellence in Teaching Awards Funding: \$21 million was appropriated in the FY2014 Public Schools Budget to be distributed directly to local school districts and public charter schools to use for differential pay and professional development. Of the total \$21 million appropriated, districts/charter schools can spend up to 40% (or \$8.4 million) on professional development, including buying time. *Total: \$8.4 million*
- House Bill 65: House Bill 65 dealt with funding in the FY2013 Public Schools Appropriation that remained after the repeal of the Students Come First laws in November 2012. Through HB 65, an estimated \$5.4 million in state funding was shifted from other programs to be distributed directly to local school districts and public charter schools to be used specifically for professional development activities related to the implementation of Idaho Core Standards, the transition to the new assessment, and the integration of digital content in the classroom. This funding will be distributed to school districts in two disbursements: a \$15,000 base allocation in the current FY2013 to each district or charter school to develop a three-year Professional Development Plan and a secondary allocation in FY2014 based on the number of instructional staff in a local school district or public charter school. *Total: \$5.4 million*

- JKAF Matching Funds in Public Schools Budget: \$4.5 million was appropriated in the FY2014 Public Schools Budget to be used on the implementation of the statewide instructional management system, known as Schoolnet. An estimated \$1.5 million of the \$4.5 million appropriated will be used to continue a statewide contract with Discovery Education and the development of examples of curricular materials and assessments available in Schoolnet. These resources assist teachers with implementation of Idaho Core Standards at the local level as they work to adopt and develop curriculum and curricular materials that best meet their students' needs. *Total: \$1.5 million*
- Idaho Leads Project: The Idaho Leads Project has received nearly \$3 million in funding from the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation to continue its efforts over the next year in working with specific school districts and public charter schools. Over the next year, Idaho Leads will focus on the implementation of Idaho Core Standards in these participating school districts. *Total: \$2.85 million*

When combined, the funding from these programs and resources totals an estimated \$21.9 million in new and existing funding that is now available to help provide professional development to Idaho teachers and school administrators on the Idaho Core Standards over the next year. Of this total, \$13.8 million will flow directly to school districts and public charter schools to be used at their discretion.

This report will focus on the \$3.755 million appropriated by the Idaho Legislature for the State Department of Education to use in providing technical assistance to local school districts and public charter schools. Before determining a budget for this funding, staff from the Idaho State Department of Education met with a focus group of educators across the state to gather their feedback and ideas.

Attendees included the following:

- Coeur d'Alene School District – Mike Nelson, Assessment Director
- Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy – Bill Prosser, Administrator
- Lewiston School District – Lisa Fenter, Curriculum Director
- Moscow School District – Cindy Bechinski, Elementary Principal
- Vallivue School District – Cindy Johnstone, Curriculum Director
- Gooding School District – Heather Williams, Superintendent
- Shoshone School District – Kelly Chapman, Middle/High School Principal
- Snake River School District – Mark Gabrylezyk, Superintendent
- Madison School District – Geoffrey Thomas, Superintendent

Based on their input, the Department crafted a budget to best meet the needs of teachers across Idaho. Specifically, the budget for fiscal year 2014 has addressed:

- Regional Support
- Existing Partnerships
- Communications and Publications

REGIONAL SUPPORT

Of the total funding, the Department budgeted \$2,518,486 to create regional support for Idaho teachers and school administrators as they implement the new, higher mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy standards.

Idaho is a geographically diverse state with school districts serving urban, suburban, rural and remote parts of Idaho. This provides many opportunities to the students and families in Idaho. When it comes to offering professional development to every educator across the state, it also presents challenges. Since the

standards were adopted in 2011, the State Department of Education has utilized existing funding to train the leaders in Idaho's public schools and districts to ensure broad reach, so these leaders could bring the professional development back to their local districts. Now, with funding from the Legislature, the Department is working to equip every teacher with the tools and resources they need to be successful in implementing the new academic standards. One way in which we are accomplishing this is by providing on-the-ground support in every region through experts in mathematics and English language arts/literacy.

The Department has contracted with regional coaches in English language arts/literacy and partnered with Idaho's institutions of higher education to establish regional mathematics centers to provide hands-on support at the local level for every school and district. These coaches not only provide support through professional development opportunities, but they also work to build self-supporting local professional learning communities that can work together throughout the school year.

Not only is this type of regional support and professional development based on research best practices, but it also is aligned with the Task Force for Improving Education recommendation for Ongoing Job-Embedded Professional Learning. Specifically, the Task Force recommended, *"Teacher effectiveness is paramount to student success, and professional development is paramount to teacher effectiveness. Professional development must be regularly scheduled and ongoing. We recommend that districts provide regular professional learning opportunities, and we support ongoing funding for professional development. We recommend the use of the research-based standards of the National Staff Development Council known as Learning Forward. We further recommend that resources for educator learning be prioritized, monitored and coordinated at the state level."* To this end, the funding for regional support as we work to implement the Idaho Core Standards is providing Idaho teachers with job-embedded professional learning at the local level on a consistent basis.

Here is an overview of the regional support the State Department of Education has built in the 2013-14 school year:

English Language Arts/Literacy

The Idaho State Department of Education created the Idaho Core Coach Network for English language arts/literacy with eight full-time core coaches who are based in each region of the state. Each coach is a master educator and content expert in English language arts/literacy with an extensive background in designing and delivering meaningful professional development to teachers. (A full list of the core coaches and their backgrounds is available on the Department's website at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/contact/regionalContacts.htm>.) Before beginning their work, the core coaches made personal contact with every school district and public charter school in the state – in some cases more than once – so they could better meet the needs of each individual school and district.

Based on this feedback, the core coaches worked with the Department to develop three strands of outreach to Idaho educators.

The first strand is a deep, sustained training for elementary teachers and secondary English language arts/literacy teachers that focuses on lesson planning and delivery. Each teacher leader participates in eight days of face-to-face training with regional teams of educators as well as a rigorous blended online course of study. The course covers eight units over one or two weeks. Here are the units of study:

- Introduction, Overview and Community
- Anchor Standards and Key Shifts
- Backwards Planning, Big Ideas and Essential Questions

- Text Complexity
- Classroom Assessment Part I
- Text Dependent Questions and Close Reading
- Classroom Assessment Part II
- Universal Design for Learning

After the course is completed, these teacher leaders are expected to replicate the training within their own local school districts. Through this work, these teacher leaders not only will learn knowledge and skills they can share with other teachers, but they also will build exemplar lesson plans that can be shared around the state via Schoolnet, so other teachers can draw on their expertise. Today, educators from 90 school districts and public charter schools are participating in this professional development, representing 85% of the student population of Idaho. Idaho's core coaches have logged 1,700 face-to-face contact days with teachers.

This professional development has received positive reviews from Idaho teachers. One teacher said, *"I love how this class is unfolding. I can feel myself learning and 'getting it!' I am doing the work and, as a result, doing the learning. Past experiences haven't set me up for so much success; the class wasn't modeling the teaching it was trying to instill. With this class, I have the proper scaffolding, modeling, and guidance and I can feel the learning. Thank you!"*

Another teacher said,

"I've been working on understanding and implementing the Common Core in my classroom for the past two years with varying degrees of success. I have attended District Professional Development days focused on the Common Core multiple times, read as much as I could online, and ordered and read multiple books touting their common core foundations, but I have yet to have anything as useful to me as the work I've been doing with the Idaho Core Coaches Program. It is a sustained inquiry with a strong support system and consistent face-to-face meetings, which have allowed me to explore, create, assist, debrief, question in ways not before possible. The work that I have done in the program, both online and in the physical meetings, has been immediately useful to me in my classroom and has challenged me to push my understandings further than before. ... In short, I am a better teacher and a more effective peer mentor because of my involvement in the Idaho Core Coaches."

Evaluations conducted at the end of the first half of the units show that respondents feel they can apply what they have learned immediately in the classroom and are confident they can replicate the training for other teachers at the local level. The core coaches have used these evaluations to modify and improve subsequent units. For example, respondents reported they did not need screen shots, so those were dropped after the first two units.

The second strand is focused on school administrators. Having principals understand what the standards look like in practice is critical going forward. Coaches in each region are providing monthly training for all administrators that parallels the training teacher leaders are receiving, so there is a common expectation of what will occur in the classroom as teachers transition to the new Idaho Core Standards.

The final strand is to build relationships with higher education institutions in order to strengthen the unity of efforts between K-12 and postsecondary institutions. The ultimate goal of the Idaho Core is to not only narrow, but ultimately close the gap between expectations at grade 12 and grade 13. Coaches have invited and had in attendance at trainings faculty from higher educational programs in content areas and teacher preparation [ISU, U of I] and regionally there has been interest in including pre-service teachers in

trainings [BYU-Idaho and NNU]. One promising example is the interest and effort the [Doceo](#) Center for Innovation + Learning & the University of Idaho. The center has sent one of their staff to fully participate in every aspect of the Core Teacher Program – even completing the online course. The Department and Center are exploring other ways to partner in the future.

In addition to the three strands mentioned above, the core coaches have also provided in-service trainings open to all educators in the regions, not just those signed up as teacher leaders. One example is multiple sessions delivered during the October in-service days in 2013. These have been highly successful and well attended. The core coaches will continue these efforts in addition to their ongoing work with teacher leaders, school administrators, and institutions of higher education.

Mathematics

The Idaho State Department of Education created the Idaho Regional Mathematics Centers, building upon the success of the Idaho Math Initiative. Idaho is fortunate to have a head start in the implementation of the Idaho Core Standards in mathematics because of the critical foundation that the Math Initiative laid. In 2008, Idaho embarked on an initiative to improve student achievement in mathematics across all grade levels. To accomplish this, the state not only worked to raise academic standards but also created the three-credit Mathematical Thinking for Instruction (MTI) course to better prepare all teachers to teach mathematics across grades K-12. The MTI course is closely aligned with the Idaho Core Standards. In addition, the Math Initiative set up regional specialists to assist teachers and school administrators as they worked to improve mathematics at the local level.

Now that Idaho is transitioning to the higher Idaho Core Standards in mathematics, the State Department of Education has partnered with Idaho's institutions of higher education to offer structured support and professional development in each region through the Idaho Regional Mathematics Centers. The primary goal of the Regional Mathematics Centers has been to establish a coordinated, collaborative, and comprehensive statewide effort from K-12 through higher education and colleges of education that makes sure Idaho's teachers are prepared for the increased rigor of the Idaho Core Standards. The Math Centers are housed within the colleges of education at each of the four-year state institutions of higher education: Idaho State University, University of Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College, and Boise State University. Four directors at these universities work with seven full-time Math Specialists across all regions of the state to provide support for educators on Idaho Core implementation. Personnel at these centers work collaboratively with the Idaho State Department of Education, representatives from local industry, as well as other faculty from higher education to ensure that the best possible support can be provided to each region. (A full list of the staff for each Regional Math Center is available on our website at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/contact/regionalContacts.htm>.)

The staff at the Regional Math Centers offer professional development opportunities to Idaho's teachers in several ways. First, they offer scheduled professional development opportunities throughout the summer and school year. Here are examples of scheduled professional development opportunities the Regional Math Centers have provided so far this year:

- Summer Statewide Mathematics Academy: The Regional Math Centers developed the Summer Mathematics Academy based on a needs-assessment conducted across the state. The academy focused on increasing teacher content knowledge in mathematics, pedagogical content knowledge, and productive classroom practices. It also featured Brad Findell, a mathematics expert who was appointed to a work group for the Common Core Standards Initiative. More than 125 teachers attended.

- Fall and Spring Regional Academies: These Academies were modeled after the Summer Mathematics Academy in each region of the state. More than 70 teachers attended in Regions 1 and 2, and 125 in Regions 5 and 6. A third regional academy is scheduled for this spring for Regions 3 and 4.

The academies have been popular among participants. Based on evaluation results, 98% of participants said they will implement at least one idea from academy they attended. Ninety-four percent said they will implement practices directly from academy to their classroom.

In addition to the scheduled professional development opportunities, the staff of the Regional Math Centers also provide support and outreach to schools as needed. For example, a local school can call up the Math Center in its region and request specific technical assistance. To date, the Math Centers have assisted local schools and districts with classroom observation and lesson or unit planning, among many other things.

EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

Of the total funding, the Department budgeted \$1,186,514 to leverage existing partnerships to offer professional development to Idaho's teachers and school administrators.

A critical component of offering professional development to Idaho's teachers is meeting them where they work on a daily basis. To do this, the Department leveraged existing partnerships to begin offering professional development and show Idaho teachers how they could transition to Idaho Core Standards using programs they are familiar with or that are already in place. For example, the Department recognizes that Discovery Learning is extremely popular with Idaho's teachers. Many access it on a daily basis to help develop lesson plans aligned to content standards. Therefore, we partnered with Discovery Learning to strengthen the outreach to all Idaho school districts and show teachers how they could use Discovery to develop lesson plans aligned with Idaho Core Standards.

Here is a breakdown of ways in which the Department has leveraged existing programs or partnerships:

School leadership: The principal's role as instructional leaders will figure heavily into the success of Idaho Core Standards implementation as they can reinforce and help sustain the instructional practices best suited to providing the deeper learning opportunities that the core emphasizes. At the same time, requirements like the new emphasis on literacy being owned across the curriculum mean managing large-scale change in a positive manner. Implementing the Idaho Core Standards is a long-term change for all schools and that requires true leadership. Transforming classroom instruction while building a positive culture of learning is a tall order. The Department has contracted with Mel Riddile, Associate Director for High School Services for the National Association of Secondary School Principals and a leader in managing long term change in schools, to provide hands-on implementation training for Idaho principals as they design and begin individual implementation efforts while simultaneously managing the change to a new culture of higher learning expectations for all students. Riddile has been the Met/Life/NASSP Principal of the Year and is a recognized leader in efforts to reinvent America's high schools and manage system-wide change. This effort is a blended model that provides ongoing and consistent support in a series of sequenced workshop dates over the coming school year focused on strategic planning and practical implementation and problem-solving for school leaders with consistent online support between face to face sessions. Building on his work for nearly two years in Idaho, Riddile will present across

Idaho on three separate occasions during the school year with online meetings in between workshops to support implementation efforts in the form of webinars and chat rooms.

Writing Projects: The Department has effectively partnered with the BSU Writing Project and the Northwest Inland Writing Project to create five regional three-day workshops for district implementation teams, created based on a train-the-trainer model so districts can replicate at the local level. These workshops move from strategies for orientation to unit planning and creation and inquiry-based teaching. To strengthen the outreach of the summer workshops for those who were unable to attend, the Department has contracted with the Boise State Writing Project to create three discrete but interlocking modules complete with goals, strategies, resources, audio, video clips, and detailed notes for trainers. These asynchronous resources – Workshops in a Box – are for districts to use as best fits their local plans to provide weekly or monthly professional development to staff, extending the reach of the face to face meetings. The Department has plans to continue its partnership with the Writing Projects into the 2014-2015 school year.

Technology Integration: The Department, the [Doceo](#) Center for Innovation + Learning & the University of Idaho, and the Northwest Inland Writing Project are partnering to provide Idaho Core training integrated with technological integration and insight into the Idaho Core Standards that address technology. As the Idaho Core Standards ask that students use digital resources strategically to research, create and present in written and oral form, this is a vital link to the standards and to the effort to link the K-12 to higher education.

Graduate Programs: Twenty-three scholarships were given to attendees who applied and were accepted in a graduate course at Boise State University on how to include and use reading and writing of argumentation in instruction. As part of the scholarship program, students agreed to provide professional development to their local districts on lessons learned. This work on argumentation follows the same regimen from 2012 on informational text and both precede the work in narrative writing that will follow in the summer of 2014. Evaluations of this hands-on training, which modeled the very instructional strategies that were being taught, were uniformly lauded with more than 80% of respondents saying they were valuable.

Committee for Teachers as Professionals: The Department has contracted with The Committee for Teachers as Professionals [CTAP] to provide grade-span training in Idaho Core Mathematics for the past two summers. These workshops focused on repurposing existing resources through the Idaho Core lens and bringing the mathematical practices found in the Core Standards into instructional design and delivery, all while working within grade spans. This made the work highly relevant from beginning to end. This year, more than 250 teachers and principals participated in the regional trainings provided by CTAP.

Schoolnet and Discovery Learning: In July and August 2013, three-day regional literacy trainings were provided for science and social studies teachers in conjunction with Discovery Learning, which featured *Schoolnet* access to the resource, Idaho's instructional management system. While Idaho has not changed the content standards in these subject areas, all teachers are expected to incorporate literacy standards into their subject areas. More than 250 Idaho science and social studies teachers attended the eight regional conferences, with more than 90% of participants strongly agreeing that what was learned would impact their daily instructional practice and more than 90% claiming the workshop to be relevant to school and individual plans for Idaho Core implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Of the total funding, the Department budgeted \$50,000 to help Idaho's teachers and school administrators better understand the Idaho Core Standards and improve communications about the Core Standards with parents and community members. The Department budgeted the \$50,000 in funding for publications and video resources.

Publications

In the past, the Department has faced challenges in outreach to every public school teacher because we cannot reach them directly via e-mail. Therefore, we developed a brochure that provided an overview of the Idaho Core Standards. It was published in Spanish and English. We printed hard copies and mailed them to every school district office, so they could hand them out to teachers and school administrators. The goal was for superintendents and principals to use these brochures in communicating with teachers and other members of school employees about the standards. Similarly, teachers could use these brochures in communicating with parents about the standards during back-to-school nights or fall parent-teacher conferences.

After mailing the brochures, the Department conducted a survey with school district staff (superintendent, curriculum directors, or public information officers) and school principals about the use of the brochures. The Department received a positive response. Several schools and district requested additional copies. In addition, the Department asked school and district administrators what other communication tools may be of use to them this school year. They requested two things: 1) similar brochures for spring parent-teacher conferences, and 2) video resources to use on school websites or during parent nights.

Video Resources

Based on the feedback from educators, the Department utilized state funding to develop video resources for schools and districts. Specifically, the Department created five videos. All videos feature Idaho teachers talking about the implementation of the Idaho Core Standards. Two videos are more focused on a teacher audience and would likely be more useful in a professional development session. Two videos are more focused on a parent audience and would be more useful in a community meeting. The fifth video is an overview video. All videos are posted on our Communications Toolkit [website](#) for schools and districts as well as the Department's YouTube page.

GOING FORWARD

Superintendent Luna has requested ongoing funding of \$3.755 million for professional development in Fiscal Year 2015. This funding will continue to focus on the implementation of the Idaho Core Standards with a large emphasis on regional support. The Department has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from Idaho's educators about the regional support in mathematics and English language arts, and we want to continue to provide this effective professional development to Idaho's teachers.